

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
CITIZENS OF THREE RIVERS
RELATIVE TO THE
CONFLAGRATION

OF

15th NOVEMBER 1856.

THREE RIVERS:
PRINTED AT THE "INQUIRER" OFFICE.

1857.

ENCLOSURE
SANTO DOMINGO

PUBLIC MEETING.

At a Public Meeting of the Citizens of Three Rivers, called by the Mayor, and held in the Town Hall on Saturday the 29th of December, 1856, at 7½, P. M., at which a large number of citizens were present, the Mayor was called to the Chair, and G. I. BARTHE, Esq., requested to act as Secretary, the following Resolutions were proposed and adopted by acclamation.

On motion of MR. POLETTE, seconded by J. G. OGDEN, Esq., it is resolved :

" That a Committee be named to enquire into the extent of the losses caused by the great fire which occurred in this Town on the 15th November last, as to the position and importance of the part of the Town destroyed, and as to the most effective means of affording assistance to the sufferers thereby, with power to increase its number if it think necessary ; and of all which the said Committee shall make report to a Public Meeting of the citizens, to be called at the request of the Committee ; and that the said Committee be composed of the following gentlemen :

A. POLETTE

A. L. DESAULNIER

and JOHN McDougall, Senr.

D. G. LABARRE

CHS. HUGHES

after which MR. SHERIFF OGDEN was called to the Chair, and, On motion of MR. GEORGE LANIGAN, Editor of the "*Inquirer*," seconded by DR. GILMOUR, the thanks of the Meeting were voted to the President and Secretary.

(Signed)

J. B. LAJOIE,

President.

G. I. BARTHE,

Secretary.

REPORT.

The Committee named at the Public Meeting of the Inhabitants of the Town of Three Rivers, held on the 29th November last, to inquire into the extent of the losses caused by the calamitous fire which occurred here on the 15th of November last, as to the position and importance of the part of the Town destroyed by the said fire, and as to the best means of affording assistance to the sufferers thereby, has the honor to make the following report :—

Before entering into the details which the Meeting has instructed the Committee to furnish, it is well briefly to mention the manner in which the deplorable accident occurred. On the 15th November last about 4 o'clock in the morning, the fire was seen to issue from Mrs. Pierre Defosses' house, situated in Notre Dame street, and occupied by Mr. Louis ROBITAILLE, Merchant Tailor. The alarm was immediately given, but at that early hour of the morning it was unfortunately impossible to assemble with the same promptness a sufficient number of persons to render effective assistance in extinguishing the flames as if the accident had occurred in the day-time. However, the people assembled as quickly as could be expected under the circumstances; the firemen, whose zeal and activity never fail, soon arrived at the place with their Engines, but unfortunately the want of water, which was felt for about half an hour after the Engines had arrived, hindered them from setting to work, and in the mean time the flames rapidly gained ground, and the fire having first caught in the adjoining house, it was quickly carried across to the houses on the other side of the street, and in an instant, driven as it was by a North-west wind, it extended to the outbuildings in rear thereof; and as it was impossible to meet the fire at all points, for it was raging in different directions, it continued to Craig street, which it crossed in a moment, and reached the buildings on Water street, St. Antoine street, René street and the South side of Platon street.

Under these circumstances the efforts of the firemen and citizens were necessarily united to endeavour to save the other buildings in Notre Dame street, on the North side of Platon street, and on the South-west side of René street: which was accomplished about ten o'clock in the morning; the part of the Town over which the fire had extended, was then but a heap of ruins, but the danger for the other parts of the Town was then wholly past. The fire had destroyed forty-four houses, amongst which were the four principal Hotels, several shops, and seventy large stores and other buildings of less importance; several of these houses contained two, and some three shops. The fire extended with such rapidity in all directions that very little furniture or merchandise could be saved.

It must be observed that the part of the Town which has thus been laid in ruins was that in which most of the commercial business of this place was transacted, and in consequence the buildings were generally speaking, of great value; and the shops and other business stands were, for the most part, stocked with goods so as to

meet the requirements of the trade, most of the merchants and tradesmen having just previously laid in their Winter stock.

The Committee thought itself bound to visit each lot to enable itself to value the several properties destroyed by the fire; and it is only after having done so, and having collected information from all the best sources from which it could be derived, that they submit the following as a statement of the loss caused by the fire.

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Forty-four Houses. | £25,500 |
| Seventy large Stores and other buildings of less importance. | 14,000 |
| Value of Goods, Household Furniture, &c., burnt | 12,880 |
| | <hr/> £52,380 |

There was not a very large amount of the property destroyed covered by Insurance, from the comparatively short period since Insurance Companies have established Agencies here. But after having made the necessary enquiries on the subject, the Committee find the following to be the amount of Insurance :—

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|
| On the Houses, Buildings, &c., | £9,100 |
| On Goods, Furniture, &c., | 3,800 |
| Total amount of Insurance, | <hr/> £12,900 |

That amount would be of great avail to the sufferers in rebuilding their properties if they could apply it to that purpose, but apart from the fact that almost all the sufferers had no other property but that which was destroyed, many of them had to hand over the amount of their insurance money to their creditors in payment of advances of goods previously made, while the greater part of the others will be forced to use it to re-establish themselves in business so as to maintain themselves and families, their credit, if not wholly mortgaged by their losses, being greatly injured. It is thus impossible to rely upon the individual resources of these persons to rebuild that part of the Town, which however is the most important and the most adapted by its position for the purposes of commerce and trade. The fire has already caused house rents to rise considerably, as well as the price of materials and labour; and the demand for houses and shops in proper positions, by the sufferers, is so great, that they will not be able to procure them even by paying very high rents.

The necessity of rebuilding the burnt part of the Town is thus doubly felt, both for the sufferers and for the interest of the Trade in general of the Town, but taking into account the want of capitalists here, from whom money could be obtained, especially at low rates of interest, it will be impossible to accomplish it without exterior assistance, and without such assistance most of the proprietors of building lots rendered vacant, will be forced to sell the proper-

ties to speculators at low prices, and thus lose the fruits of their past labour and industry.

Your Committee, therefore, thought itself bound to think of the means of overcoming the disaster, and after having maturely reflected thereon, it has come to the conclusion that none other can be found but such as the Government and Legislature might afford. The fire in question has caused as great a loss to Three Rivers, comparatively speaking, as the fire in Quebec in 1845, and that of Montreal in 1852, caused to these two cities respectively, bearing in mind the importance of the part of this Town destroyed by the fire; and your Committee think that it may justifiably use the example of these two cities, to suggest that an application be made to the Government, praying for a loan of money to assist the sufferers by the fire, and to enable them to rebuild.

The circumstances of this Town are so different from those of the two large cities referred to that your Committee cannot suggest that the loan be obtained, under the same conditions as those under which the Montreal loan was obtained, but it thinks that a loan might be asked under the same conditions, as those under which Quebec obtained hers, adding thereto the guarantee of the Town.

The Committee enquired into the price of building materials and labour, which have considerably increased since the fire, and which will rise still higher if many buildings are to be erected; and according to an estimate which it thinks pretty correct, it does not believe that the proprietors can begin to rebuild, unless a loan of £15,000 can be effected, without including in the estimate the very small number of sufferers who can dispense with assistance.

Your Committee therefore recommend that a person be deputed to Toronto to solicit from Government its sanction to the loan of £17,000 from the public Treasury of the Province; and that sufficient latitude be given to said person to allow him to agree as to the conditions under which the Government may consent to recommend such a measure to the Legislature.

The Committee has thought it necessary to accompany its report with a detailed statement of the losses suffered, and the Insurances effected on the properties destroyed, and a diagram shewing the extent and position of the property destroyed.

The Committee relies as you yourselves rely on public sympathy as well as on the solicitude and generosity of Government, and of the Legislature to alleviate as much as possible such a fearful calamity.

The whole humbly submitted.
(Signed)

A. POLETTE
D. G. LABARRE,
J. McDOUGALL,
A. L. DESAULNIER,
C. HUGHES.

THREE RIVERS, 24 December, 1856.

==
NAMES
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Edouard
A. Ca
L. Ro
Gra
J. A.
Mrs. J.
G. F.
A. D.
John J.
J. The
Pierre
A. Gu
Louis
Jos. M.
G. De
H. Ri
F. X.
Ls. B.
B. Ri
R. Lo
T A

...being be translated into the English language and printed in pamphlet form in the two languages for the use of the Deputation to Toronto, and that of the members of Parliament who may be inter-

| NAMES OF PARTIES. | Number of Houses. | Insurance on Houses | Value of Houses. | Value of Stock and Furniture | Insr. on Stock & Furniture | STREETS. |
|------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Edouard Lesieur..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 600 | none | du Fleuve |
| A. Cadorette..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 20 | " | " |
| L. Robitaille..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 800 | 400 | Notre Dame |
| Gravelle..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 100 | none | " |
| J. A. Olivier..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 600 | 300 | " |
| Mrs. J. Giroux..... | 1 | 550 | 1200 | 2100 | 1150 | " |
| G. F. Loranger..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 200 | none | du Fleuve |
| A. D. McPherson & al. | 1 | 700 | 1500 | 850 | 250 | " |
| John Johnston..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 100 | none | du Platon |
| J. Thompson..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 50 | " | du Fleuve |
| Pierre Poliquin..... | 1 | none | 1500 | 1500 | " | " |
| A. Guy..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 60 | " | " |
| Louis Clair..... | 1 | ..... | 100 | 200 | " | St. Antoine |
| Jos. Morrelle..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 300 | " | du Fleuve |
| G. Decoteau..... | 1 | none | 400 | 50 | " | St. René |
| H. Rivard..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 75 | " | " |
| F. X. Guy..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 50 | " | du Fleuve |
| La. Boulard..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 25 | " | St. Antoine |
| B. Richot..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 30 | " | du Fleuve |
| R. Louthood..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 100 | " | du Platon |
| J. G. Luckerhoff..... | 1 | none | 750 | 750 | " | St. Antoine |
| A. M. Hart..... | 1 | 300 | 600 | ..... | " | du Platon |
| J. B. Pothier..... | 1 | 300 | 600 | 1200 | 500 | " |
| J. M. Harrison..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 700 | 500 | " |
| J. U. Ritter..... | 1 | 500 | 500 | 900 | 500 | " |
| Thomas Fortin..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 150 | none | " |
| Timothy Durocher... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 50 | " | " |
| G. Verrette..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 125 | " | " |
| Z. Vidal..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 50 | " | du Fleuve |
| J. Greig..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 500 | 200 | du Platon |
| Mrs. Martel..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 45 | none | St. Antoine |
| Ths. Dickson..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 25 | " | " |
| Mrs. Chs. Belnois..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 20 | " | " |
| P. L. Graig..... | 1 | none | 300 | 25 | " | " |
| John Rockery..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 25 | " | " |
| Widow Bargerion..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 15 | " | Craig |
| Pierre Decoteau..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 100 | " | du Fleuve |
| George Farmer..... | ..... | ..... | ..... | 400 | " | " |
| Mrs. Pierre Defosses.. | 2 | 800 | 1200 | ..... | " | Notre Dame |
| D. E. Frigon..... | 1 | 400 | 700 | ..... | " | " |
| A. Larue..... | 1 | 400 | 600 | ..... | " | " |
| J. G. Barthe..... | 1 | 250 | 600 | ..... | " | " |
| J. Deveau..... | ..... | ..... | 200 | ..... | " | " |
| Mrs. Dickson..... | 6 | 450 | 1900 | ..... | " | divers |
| Dr. Gilmor..... | 3 | 500 | 1450 | ..... | " | " |
| Pierre Decoteau..... | 2 | ..... | 600 | ..... | " | du Fleuve |
| Edward Pacaud..... | 3 | 2300 | 2750 | ..... | " | " |
| John Molson..... | 4 | ..... | 3700 | ..... | " | " |
| Chs. Beaudry..... | 1 | ..... | 500 | ..... | " | St. René |
| S. B. Hart..... | 3 | 750 | 1600 | ..... | " | du Platon |
| G. B. Houliston..... | 1 | 400 | 400 | ..... | " | " |
| John Pratt..... | 1 | 200 | 500 | ..... | " | " |
| C. Kiernan..... | 2 | 200 | 600 | ..... | " | Craig |
| L. D. Craig..... | 1 | 100 | 400 | ..... | " | " |
| J. B. Gauthier..... | 1 | ..... | 250 | ..... | " | St. René |
| Ed. Terreau..... | 1 | ..... | 300 | ..... | " | St. Antoine |
| 44 | £9,100 | £25500 | £12880 | £3800 | | |

| Value of Stock and Furniture | Insr. on Stock & Furniture | STREETS. | No. of out-build- ings. | Occupation of Tenant. |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 600 | none | du Fleuve | .... | Hotel |
| 20 | " | " | .... | Barber |
| 800 | 400 | Notre Dame | .... | Merchant |
| 100 | none | " " | .... | Tailor |
| 600 | 300 | " " | .... | Merchant |
| 2100 | 1150 | " " | 4 | do. |
| 200 | none | du Fleuve | .... | do. |
| 850 | 250 | " | 2 | Hotel |
| 100 | none | du Platon | .... | Jewelry |
| 50 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Livery Stables |
| 1500 | " | " | 4 | Hotel |
| 60 | " | " | .... | Flour Merchant |
| 200 | " | St. Antoine | .... | Blacksmith |
| 300 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Merchant |
| 50 | " | St. René | 2 | Carter |
| 75 | " | " " | .... | Navigator |
| 50 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Baker |
| 25 | " | St. Antoine | .... | Tenant |
| 30 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Flour Merchant |
| 100 | " | du Platon | .... | Merchant |
| 750 | " | St. Antoine | 3 | Tin Smith |
| .... | " | du Platon | 1 | " |
| 1200 | 500 | " | 2 | Merchant |
| 700 | 500 | " | .... | Tin Smith |
| 900 | 500 | " | 3 | Merchant |
| 150 | none | " | .... | Grocer |
| 50 | " | " | .... | Merchant |
| 125 | " | " | .... | Green Grocer |
| 50 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Hotel |
| 500 | 200 | du Platon | .... | Painter |
| 45 | none | St. Antoine | .... | Green Grocer |
| 25 | " | " | .... | Labourer |
| 20 | " | " | .... | " |
| 25 | " | " | 1 | Notary |
| 25 | " | " | .... | Tailor |
| 15 | " | Craig | .... | " |
| 100 | " | du Fleuve | .... | Hotel |
| 400 | " | " | .... | " |
| .... | " | Notre Dame | .... | Proprietor |
| .... | " | " " | 2 | Merchant |
| .... | " | " " | 2 | " |
| .... | " | " " | 1 | Proprietor |
| .... | " | " " | 3 | " |
| .... | " | divers | 6 | " |
| .... | " | " | 5 | " |
| .... | " | du Fleuve | 2 | " |
| .... | " | " | 5 | " |
| .... | " | " | 6 | " |
| .... | " | St. René | 2 | " |
| .... | " | du Platon | 5 | " |
| .... | " | " | 2 | " |
| .... | " | " | 2 | " |
| .... | " | Craig | 2 | " |
| .... | " | " | 1 | Notary |
| .... | " | St. René | 1 | Baker |
| .... | " | St. Antoine | 1 | Proprietor |
| 2880 | £3800 | | 70 | |

RECAPITULATION.

| | |
|--|---------|
| Value of Houses burnt | £25,000 |
| do. of Out Buildings | 14,000 |
| do. of Stock, Furniture, &c | 12,880 |
| | £52,380 |
| Insurance on Houses and Outbuildings | £9100 |
| do. on Stock, Furniture, &c | 3800 |
| | £12,900 |
| Total loss | £39,480 |

Cr.

Value of 70 Out Buildings, £14,000

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A. E. DECHAMBERLAIN,
C. HUGHES.

THREE RIVERS, 24 December, 1856.

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SECOND MEETING.

At a Public Meeting of the citizens of the Town of Three Rivers, held in the Town Hall on the 30th December, 1856, at 7½ o'clock, P. M., in accordance with Public Notice thereof previously given.

J. BTE. LAJOIE, Esq., Mayor, was called to the Chair, and G. J. BARTHE, Esq., requested to act as Secretary.

The object of the Meeting having been explained, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted.

On motion of MR. POLETTE, seconded by MR. LABARRE, it is resolved :

"That the Report of the Committee named at the Public Meeting of the 29th November last be now read."

The Report is then read, and,

On motion of MR. POLETTE, seconded by MR. OGDEN, it is resolved :

"That this meeting concur in the Report of the Committee, and that such Report serve as the basis, as far as circumstances may permit, to any negotiations that may be entered into with Government with relation to the loan of money recommended by said Report."

On motion of MR. McDUGALL, seconded by MR. KIERNAN, it is resolved :

"That MR. POLETTE be deputed to Toronto to negotiate with the Government the loan of money recommended by said Report, and that the said Report and the preceding resolution serve him as a guide as far as possible in the accomplishment of his duties."

On motion of MR. OGDEN, seconded by MR. J. B. GAUTHIER, it is resolved :

"That a subscription be raised to defray the expenses of the Deputation to Toronto, and all other necessary expenses ; that MESSRS. GILMOR, C. KIERNAN, J. B. GAUTHIER, F. ROCHELEAU, and J. CARON, be requested to undertake the raising thereof, and that MR. G. B. HOULISON be named Treasurer."

On motion of MR. JOHN RYAN, seconded by MR. T. RICHABY, it is resolved :

"That the Report of the Committee and the proceedings of this Meeting be translated into the English language and printed in pamphlet form in the two languages for the use of the Deputation to Toronto, and that of the members of Parliament who may be inter-

ested with the introduction of any measure in Parliament bound in the said Report."

On motion of **MR. J. B. GAUTHIER**, seconded by **O. CHENEVERT**, it is resolved :

"That a Petition to his Excellency the Governor General be prepared to sustain the said Report, and to forward the object of the Deputation to Toronto, and that **MESSRS. F. LOTTINVILLE, Z. DUVAL, J. RYAN, FRs. ROUSSEAU**, and **T. RICKABY**, be requested to obtain the signatures of the citizens to the said Petition."

On motion of **MR. O. CHENEVERT**, seconded by **MR. F. ROCHELEAU**, it is resolved :

"That the Committee named at the Meeting of the 29th November last be requested to remain in office for the purpose of directing and carrying through what is to be done in execution of the foregoing resolutions."

After which, **MR. SHERIFF OGDEN** being called to the Chair, the thanks of the Meeting were voted to the President and Secretary.

(Signed)

J. B. LAJOIE,

President.

G. I. BARTHE,

Secretary.



PETITION.

To His Excellency Sir Edmund Walker Head, Baronet, Governor General of British North America, and Captain General and Governor-in-Chief in and over the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Island of Prince Edward, and Vice-Admiral of the same, &c., &c., &c.

The undersigned inhabitants of the Town of Three Rivers, by their present Petition, most humbly represent :

That on the 15th of November last a most disastrous fire occurred in this Town, which destroyed forty-four houses and seventy large stores and buildings of less importance, in the most commercial and flourishing part of the Town.

That the loss caused by the calamity amounts to fifty thousand two hundred and eighty pounds currency, thirty nine thousand, five hundred pounds of which consisted of real property, and twelve thousand, eight hundred and eighty pounds of personal property ; and that almost all the sufferers had no other property but that which was destroyed.

That some of the sufferers had effected Insurance on their property, for an amount however much less than its value ; but that most of these parties have been obliged to pay over the monies arising from that source to their creditors, from whence they had obtained advances of merchandise, while the remainder are forced to raise that money to re-establish their different business, so as to be able to maintain themselves and their families, their credit being considerably injured in consequence of the losses which they sustained.

That almost all the sufferers by the fire are without means to rebuild their houses ; and that it is their interest as well as that of the commerce of the Town in general, that the part of the Town destroyed by the fire be rebuilt, and unless such be done, it will be exceedingly difficult for the sufferers to find fit places to carry on their business, without taking into account that the rents of houses for next spring have been considerably raised, and still continue to rise, in consequence of the scarcity caused by the fire.

Your Petitioners take the liberty to draw the attention of your Excellency to the accompanying Report, which contains Statistics on the subject of the fire, and the views of your Petitioners, which they have an interest in making known to your Excellency.

That the sufferers by the fire not having sufficient means to overcome their misfortune, your Petitioners see no other way of affording them assistance, except by a loan from the public funds of about fifteen thousand pounds, at a low rate of interest, payable at a sufficiently long date; for which loan each borrower shall grant a privileged mortgage on his property, which, also, for additional security, he should cause to be insured for an amount equal to the sum borrowed, and that the Town give its guarantee for the amount and interest.

Under these circumstances your Petitioners humbly pray your Excellency to take their present Petition into your favorable consideration, and to recommend to the Legislature and sanction such measures as in your wisdom you may think right and of a nature to assist the unfortunate persons whose losses by the fire are so great.

Three Rivers, January 2nd., 1857.



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